

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A computer system for generating a cost estimate, the computer system configured to:

receive input at a computing device specifying at least one item to add to a cost estimate wherein the computing device automatically adds a burden associated with the at least one item ~~is automatically added~~ to the cost estimate; and

output from the computing device a first value chain for the at least one item by the item's selected by the computing device based on one or more constituent component(s) of the item(s) and supply tier wherein the value chain includes an image and burden information for the at least one item and each [[of its]] constituent [[components]] component.

2. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 1 additionally configured to output an embedded value chain associated with an item displayed in the first value chain wherein the embedded value chain is illustrated by supplier tier and includes an image and burden information for at least one item within the embedded value chain.

3. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 1 additionally configured to expand and decrease a level of detail for the burden information associated with the at least one item.

4. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 1 wherein the burden information associated with the at least one item includes design cost information.

5. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 1 wherein the burden information associated with the at least one item includes controls cost information.

6. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 1 additionally configured to receive input defining a labor rate structure used in calculating burden information for the cost estimate.

7. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 1 additionally configured to output the cost estimate in a format similar to a supplier's cost estimate format.

8. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 1 wherein the cost burdens associated with the items included in the cost estimate and value chain are populated based on a database of cost burdens.

9. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 8 wherein the cost burdens maintained within the database are globally updated based on an index value which reflects fluctuations in market pricing for items included in the database.

10. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 9 wherein the index is calculated based on price fluctuations experienced in a subset of items generally representative of other items maintained in the database.

11. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 8 wherein the database of cost burdens include negotiated, best-in-class and off-the-shelf costs for at least one item.

12. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for generating a cost estimate, the method comprising:

receiving input at a computing device specifying at least one item to add to a cost estimate wherein the computing device automatically adds a burden associated with the at least one item ~~is automatically added~~ to the cost estimate; and

outputting from the computing device a first value chain for the at least one item selected by the [[item's]] computing device based on one or more constituent component(s)

of the item and corresponding supply tier wherein the value chain includes an image and burden information for the at least one item and each [[of its]] constituent [[components]] component.

13. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 12 further comprising outputting an embedded value chain associated with an item displayed in the first value chain wherein the embedded value chain is illustrated by supplier tier and includes an image and burden information for at least one item within the embedded value chain.

14. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 12 further comprising expanding and decreasing a level of detail for the burden information associated with the at least one item.

15. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 12 additionally comprising globally adjusting the burden information based on an index value which reflects fluctuations in market pricing for the at least one item.

16. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 12 further comprising outputting the cost estimate in a format similar to a supplier's cost estimate format.

17. (withdrawn) A method for negotiating a price for manufacturing tooling, the method comprising:

receiving a quote for a manufacturing tool from a manufacturing tool supplier; generating an estimate for the manufacturing tool wherein the estimate is generated electronically independent of the quote and in a format similar to the format of the quote;

comparing the quote and the estimate to identify at least one unacceptable discrepancy in pricing; and

during negotiation with the supplier, leveraging the supplier with a plurality of cost burden and value chain information corresponding to the manufacturing tool to reduce the at least one discrepancy in pricing wherein the plurality of cost burden and value chain information is provided electronically based on the cost estimate.

18. (withdrawn) The method of claim 17 wherein the estimate is generated electronically by a cost-estimating software application configured to present detailed burden information, a value chain and a plurality of images corresponding to the manufacturing tool.

19. (currently amended) A computer system for generating a cost estimate, the system comprising:

a means for specifying at a computing device at least one item to add to a cost estimate wherein the computing device automatically adds a burden associated with the at least one item ~~is automatically added~~ to the cost estimate; and

a means for outputting from the computing device a value chain for the at least one item ~~by the item's selected by the computing device based on one or more~~ constituent component(s) of the item and corresponding supply tier wherein the value chain includes an image and burden information for the at least one item and ~~[[each of]]~~ its constituent component(s).

20. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 19 additionally comprising a means for outputting the cost estimate in a format similar to a supplier's cost estimate format.

21. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 19 additionally comprising a means for reducing and expanding a scope for the value chain.

22. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 19 additionally comprising:

a means for outputting from the computing device a plurality of burdens associated with the at least one item; and

a means for expanding and reducing a level of detail in which the plurality of burdens are output.

23. (currently amended) The computer system of claim 22 additionally comprising a means for globally adjusting the value of the plurality of cost burdens based on an index value which reflects fluctuations in market pricing.